UNITED
NATIONS

DP

Governing Council
of the
United Nations
Development Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/CP/BKF/NOTE/5
25 March 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Thirty-ninth session
4-29 May 1992, Geneva
Item 6 of the provisional agenda

PROGRAMME PLANNING

Country and intercountry programmes and projects

FIFTH COUNTRY PROGRAMME FOR BURKINA FASO

Note of the Administrator

I. THE PROGRAMMING PROCESS

1. The preparation of the country programme in February-October 1991 took place at the climax of a period of intense policy formulation and planning by the Government. Burkina Faso's first Structural Adjustment Programme (1991-1993) had been negotiated throughout 1990 and the policy framework paper was officially submitted to the Bretton Woods institutions in the second quarter of 1991. At the same time the Government was finalizing its second Five Year Plan (1992-1996), which was formally launched in August 1991. Both these documents reflected the Government's new policy orientation towards a market economy and provided clear guidelines for UNDP's own programme formulation exercise.

2. The preparation of the country programme benefited from studies in support of four sectoral adjustment loans (transport, agriculture, education and health) which are to be negotiated for the Structural Adjustment Programme period. Also, under the leadership of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) the studies for the agricultural sector loan have in particular provided sectoral guidance for the country programming exercise and will continue to do so for the process of programme and project formulation. Two other important studies have also contributed to the orientation of the fifth country programme. These are the first phase of Burkina Faso's National Technical Cooperation Assessment and Programme (NaTCAP) exercise and a UNDP-sponsored study on institutional capacity for economic management.

3. To promote donor support for the Structural Adjustment Programme Burkina Faso's first macroeconomic round table conference was held in Geneva on 23-24 May 1991. Donors at the conference expressed general agreement with the Government's policy orientations and met the pledging targets that had been set. In addition agreements were reached on measures for enhanced aid coordination between the Government and donors and among donors. These agreements have provided a favourable environment for ensuring the compatibility of the fifth country programme objectives with other donors' activities and for specific cooperation arrangements in specific areas. Preparations for the sectoral round tables planned for the agriculture, education and health sectors will further enhance Government and donor cooperation.

4. The country programming exercise took as its starting point the report of the mid-term review of the fourth country programme which had taken place in February 1990. This report was largely positive on the substance of the programme but made a number of recommendations about implementation modalities which were further developed in the NaTCAP exercise. These topics were covered in the advisory note.

5. Early in the fifth country programming exercise (February 1991) a review was made with the Government of the priority areas for UNDP cooperation, and agreement was reached on three themes for the fifth country programme, namely, economic management, national resources management and private sector promotion. At the same time it was agreed that, in view of the intense policy formulation exercises being concurrently undertaken (mentioned above) no agency programming missions would be required. It was decided rather that, in order to foster Government ownership of the whole exercise, joint working groups should be created to advance the programming of specific themes. These working groups consisted of members of the Ministry of Plan, the UNDP Office and of the relevant technical Ministries. The groups met regularly between February and May 1991 and their recommendations were incorporated into the section on programme orientations reflected in the country programme.

6. The advisory note received approval from the UNDP Action Committee on 24 July 1991 and was endorsed by the Government on 18 October 1991. On the basis of this endorsement the country programme was prepared. The Government submitted the programme for UNDP consideration.

II. ANALYTICAL COMMENTARY ON THE FIFTH COUNTRY PROGRAMME

7. The Government of Burkina Faso's policy objectives for the early 1990s include (a) setting Government finances on a sure footing; (b) opening up the economy to individual initiative; (c) laying a firm basis for sustainable growth in the productive sectors of the economy and (d) promoting the social infrastructure. It is the Administrator's view that the fifth country programme will play a key role in promoting the achievement of these objectives.

8. To achieve the first of these objectives the country programme under Theme I (Economic Management) will provide assistance to the central Ministries to strengthen their capacity to implement the financial aspects of the Structural Adjustment Programme and to promote other measures to liberalize the economy. This assistance will be provided in a coordinated cluster of projects aimed at achieving a coherent set of overall objectives. The Government sees UNDP's neutrality as providing definite comparative advantage in this area and UNDP is working in close coordination with the Government and other donors.

9. With a poor resource base and faced with environmental degradation and mounting demographic pressure, the Government's rural development strategy is geared towards ensuring sustainable and environmentally sound natural resources management. The Administrator fully supports this approach and endorses the fifth country programme's second theme, which has a three-pronged area of intervention, namely, natural forest management, soil conservation and water resources management. The Administrator notes with satisfaction, that the second theme, in electing to attain this objective, focuses on rural community empowerment, gender-sensitive issues, and a progressive user's fees scheme for target beneficiaries of improved natural resources management, thus enhancing human development conditions in the country.

10. To support the economic reform process and ensure a freer interplay of market forces, the Administrator specifically recognizes the pivotal role that UNDP could assume in this area and endorses the objective of the third theme (Private Sector Promotion). In a country with a financially starved public sector and deficit-ridden parastatal enterprises, promotion of the private sector is the key to higher employment and increased income for the majority. The third theme identified three areas of focus: Privatization of State-owned corporations, promotion of small-scale enterprise and provision of vocational training for improving the adequacy of demand and supply of labour.

III. MANAGEMENT OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

11. The importance of providing greater flexibility in programme management was strongly supported in the advisory note. In particular, the programme approach and the national execution modality were strongly recommended and have subsequently been endorsed by the Government in the country programme. The country programme has adopted three themes within which several clusters of projects will be implemented. Furthermore it is foreseen that during the project identification stage some programmes will be defined in line with the programme approach. A single programme manager will be appointed in such cases. UNDP and the Government are also fully committed to increasing the level of national execution, and a national seminar has already been held to train government officials in the required procedures. A follow-up seminar with government officials is planned to finalize the Government's own modalities for the adoption of national execution, and a first group of projects for national execution will then be selected. Other means of

enhancing programme management flexibility, such as collaboration with NGOs and the use of United Nations Volunteers will also be employed during the fifth country programme.

12. The fifth country programme for Burkina Faso provides for a mid-term review in 1994. The review will assess the validity of the themes of the country programme and evaluate their relevance with prevailing government priorities. As a means to intensifying the policy dialogue and promoting better management and coordination of UNDP assistance, the Government will assume added responsibility in the implementation of the fifth country programme. To that end, the round table process will be pursued, along with sectoral and thematic consultations, the results of which help improve the effectiveness and the efficiency of the country programme. Greater national ownership and internalization will be emphasized throughout the implementation of the country programme.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

13. The fifth country programme for Burkina Faso fully supports the new political and economic reform process undertaken by the Government and will contribute in a variety of ways to the country's economic and social development. The Administrator is satisfied that it is a well-focused programme which will ensure an optimal use of UNDP resources and reflects the six areas of focus of UNDP. For these reasons, the Administrator recommends that the Governing Council approve the fifth country programme for Burkina Faso.